



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

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Sam I

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

December 22, 1982

Mr. William Safire
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, New York 10036

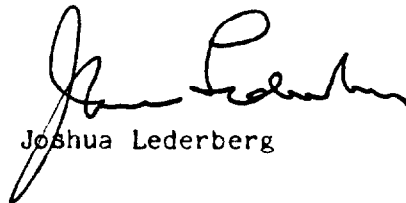
Dear Mr. Safire:

I was deeply heartened to see your riposte to the shallow ethics of the Times editorial about the valor and value of Dr. Clark's struggle to live. How can anyone but Barney Clark speak to that choice? I agree with every word you wrote!

Sharing that ethical ground I believe you will agree with me about the tragic social and political dilemma that this technology poses. When it is perfected it will affect the outcome of many more lives per year than the 50,000 indicated by primary cardiomyopathy. The costs will be multiplied by the surgical opportunities enabled for patients who would otherwise have expired. (Still, \$10 B or so in annual increments of health expenditure is dwarfed by today's health budget, much of which is spent on less fruitful measures.)

When I wrote about this 16 years ago, I thought we'd move a decade faster than we have: I believe more for cultural hesitation than technological difficulty. Meanwhile we have not really had a focussed debate on how much medical technology is in the social contract. I know how I would vote; but lest we slide into a new social charter by inadvertence, I hope you will attend to this horn as well.

Yours sincerely,



Joshua Lederberg

or whatever one does with each lemma.

Personal Memo from
JOSHUA LEDERBERG

RS.

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~~Personal debate on science~~

— as I think back over the last 20 years, may be a naive philosophy of politics. When such debate happens it is rarely timely or well-informed and "muddling through" may be the best that democracy can achieve.

But debate on piecemeal bits of social engineering — by all means, and with as much scientific expertise out in the open as possible!

J. L.